

A Few Words about Economic Development and Superfund

EPA's primary responsibility at Superfund sites is to protect human health and the environment. Economic redevelopment is also a valued component at all Superfund sites, and efforts are made across the country to address these needs, when appropriate opportunities arise and funding is available. While not in the Superfund law, it has recently become an important Superfund initiative.

EPA has done its best to recognize and be sensitive to the special concerns and needs of all Libby residents. We've looked for opportunities to work with citizens; businesses; community groups; local, State, and Federal elected officials; and others to identify ways that the investigation and remediation work being conducted by EPA could also serve to advance economic development within the community.

This level of cooperation between EPA and the community goes beyond that seen at typical Superfund sites. EPA's commitment to Libby is to complete a protective cleanup, minimize negative economic impacts to the community, and maximize public health and economic benefits to the community.

EPA has worked successfully with local Libby stakeholders to incorporate investigation and remediation efforts with economic development needs that are important to the community. The results of that support are also provided.





Direct Assistance and Support

The Need

Libby citizens and the business community felt that an economic development “event” was needed to “jump-start” the many opportunities for economic development that have been envisioned and started, but stalled for a variety of reasons. These opportunities needed to be restarted and nurtured at a grass roots level to be implemented successfully.

EPA’s Response - Economic Redevelopment Workshops

In response to this need, EPA facilitated and financially sponsored two very successful Economic Development workshops in 2003.



Dream It! Do It! April 2003

EPA funded and facilitated organization of the three-day *Dream It! Do It!* workshop. Local government, economic development groups, and citizens actively participated in identifying and obtaining speakers. There were 12, professionally-facilitated sessions, more than 30 speakers, and 220 attendees (including Senator Conrad Burns, Representative Dennis Rehberg, and nationally-known redevelopment speaker, Roger Brooks). Portions of the workshop were even carried live on local radio.

Dream It. Do It! II – November, 2003

The community response to the original workshop was so positive that local economic development groups organized and EPA financially sponsored a follow up event. This successful one-day workshop featured a return visit by Roger Brooks, an inspiring speaker on redevelopment, talking about developing a brand and marketing the town. More than 100 community members attended the workshop. The dynamic format involved all who attended and focused on the status of the Downtown Revitalization, Gateway Signs, Aquatic Center, Education, the Port Authority, and the Stimson Mill and Fiber Optics.

Results

The response to both of these workshops from the local community was very positive. For example:

- The workshops received positive press in the local media and a positive response from citizens.



Direct Assistance and Support (cont.)

- The Lincoln County Tourism Coalition was formed to spearhead future efforts. They have since received non-profit status. Their mission statement is *Enhancing tourism for Lincoln County through education, promotion, and infrastructure*. They attended the last two Governor's conferences on tourism.
- A brand name was developed for the Lincoln County area – *Kootenai River Country*, and the tag line for that brand is *Montana's Great Northwest – Rich, Rare, and Remote*. These will be used to market the area.
- Networking relationships were developed between locals with similar redevelopment interests and experts that could provide advice.
- Groups which had previously been unaligned came together to work for a common goal. These include: snowmobilers, ATV enthusiasts, motorcyclists, and back country horsemen
- "Gateway Signs" with the brand name are now in place.
- *Libby Revitalization, Inc.* is working on a "Streetscape Project" to improve and enhance the downtown area of Libby.

Stimson pictures

The Need

The former Stimson Mill site on the east side of Libby is a large, well-sited property that has the potential to house Libby business tenants, bring in local revenue, be a recreation area, and to be a source of pride for the community. A comprehensive assessment of the potentially contaminated area was needed to allow Lincoln County to safely pursue redevelopment of the property.

EPA's Response - Port Authority Cooperative Agreement, 2004 - 2005

In response to this need, EPA signed a Cooperative Agreement with the Lincoln Port Authority to assist in land-use planning at the former Stimson Mill property. The purpose of the agreement was to facilitate development of a professional site plan that would "encourage productive and non-conflicting development of the diverse landscape".

The land-use planning work was split into phases to provide market evaluation, engineering assessment, and site design services within the agreement:

- **Phase 1:** Environmental sampling data collection relevant to the area and property, a site and community tour, and selected local interviews

Direct Assistance and Support (cont.)

- **Phase 2:** Assessment of site infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.)
- **Phase 3:** Assessment of existing facilities, structural engineering work, electrical and plumbing, fire inspection, etc.
- **Phase 4:** Physical site assessment (natural features), land use planning and cost estimate
- **Phase 5:** Marketing plan and potential funding sources

The agreement is active until late 2005.

The Results

The results of this Cooperative Agreement between EPA and Lincoln County are:

■ *(waiting for input) Any ideas?*

■ Xx

■ Xxx

The Need

Before cleanup of local businesses began, the business community was concerned about how cleanup events at their properties would affect their business. Their biggest concern was the fear of severe economic hardship, if cleanups happened during the peak tourist seasons or other high-profit seasons, took too long, or drove away potential customers.

EPA's Response - Proactive Assistance for Business Owners

In response to these concerns, EPA developed a proactive assistance program for businesses scheduled for remediation.

- EPA regularly meets with business owners who may undergo cleanup.
- EPA listens to their concerns and works to limit any impacts.



Direct Assistance and Support (cont.)

- When businesses are scheduled for cleanup, EPA will schedule at the owner's convenience, wherever possible.
- A system has been developed for businesses undergoing cleanup that will compensate them for shutting down during cleanup - generally sufficient to cover or offset overhead during the cleanup period. *This is specific to Libby and not the norm at Superfund sites.*

EPA's support to businesses includes a Community Involvement Coordinator (CIC) dedicated to business clean-ups whose job is to facilitate the remediation of local business properties. The CIC is responsible for conducting all the relocation and pre- and post-construction meetings, gathering information from owners and tenants, advising owners of relocation arrangements, answering questions, and coordinating solutions to issues that arise during and after the remediation.

The Results

As of May 2005, business cleanups have not yet started in Libby. However, EPA has received feedback from the business community based on initial meetings with business owners. This feedback indicates that the implemented procedures will help to ease concerns, identify problems in advance so they can be corrected, and build goodwill within the community.



Assisting the Real Estate Community

The Need

The real estate community was concerned that the investigation and cleanup work being done by EPA would slow or stop home sales, make appraisals cumbersome, and make financing more difficult, if not impossible to obtain. Locals felt that new home buyers would be scared of buying property in Libby and home values would plummet. The community wanted assistance from EPA to prevent or minimize these potential problems.

EPA's Response - A Multi-Phased Assistance Approach

In response to this need, EPA developed a multi-phased assistance approach for the real estate community.



"Comfort Letters" for Residents

EPA has written many of "comfort letters" to support real estate transactions. These letters describe the work that will be done at the property in question and assure the buyer that cleanup will occur at no cost to them. Home buyers, appraisers, and mortgage lenders have found these letters to be extremely useful in answering some of the uncertainties associated with a Superfund cleanup. In addition, EPA has immediately interceded in at least 20 difficult loans to ensure closing by talking with loan officers, appraisers, potential buyers, etc.

Mortgage Lending Meeting, November 2001

EPA arranged for representatives of federal mortgage insurers, lenders and loan underwriters to attend meetings in Libby, make presentations about what they look for in loan packages and answer the community's questions about effects of Superfund on real estate transactions.

Priority Sampling to Accommodate Pending Sales

EPA makes the sampling of properties pending sale a priority, and we regularly adjust our schedules to accommodate these requests. We've also worked with local real estate professionals to develop a system for getting sampling information to the right parties without violating privacy concerns.



Real Estate Meeting, April 2005

EPA recently held a half-day meeting tailored to the needs and concerns of the real estate community. Realtors, mortgage, lenders, and appraisers in Troy and Libby and members of the Northwest Montana Realtors Association were also invited to attend. The topics included: lender liability, comfort letters, disclosure to buyers and renters, general cleanup issues, and upcoming events and process.

Assisting the Real Estate Community

Eighteen real estate professionals from the Libby and Troy area attended the meeting. The interaction was productive for real estate professionals and for EPA. We learned of several additional actions we can take to facilitate smooth real estate transactions.



The Results

The results of this proactive assistance program are evident in the response from the real estate community and in data and anecdotal information on home sales in Libby:

- Sales of commercial, multi-family, residential, and land in Libby increased from 139 (\$10,911,000) in 2002 to 223 (\$17,228,850) in 2004 – an increase of over 60%.
- In its October 30, 2004 issue, the *Western News* reported that Libby Board of Realtors stated that “Libby-Troy area real estate agents are enjoying the best market in several years.”
- Local appraisers speak highly of the Superfund process in their appraisal reports.
- The real estate community has expressed its gratitude to EPA about the workshops tailored to their needs.



Helping to Erase the Stigma

The Need

The community was concerned that the Superfund designation was a negative stigma from which Libby could not recover. EPA needed to take measures to educate the local public, visitors, and potential investors about the true scope of risks and the work that was being done to address them.

EPA's Response - Reaching out to the Community

In response to this need, EPA has worked exceptionally hard to educate and communicate to limit the stigma associated with Superfund and asbestos at Libby. With few exceptions, media contact is rarely initiated, and EPA keeps a very low profile. In instances where we do initiate media contact, it is virtually always positive. We put a "welcome to Libby" message out.

Libby-Friendly Website and Brochure

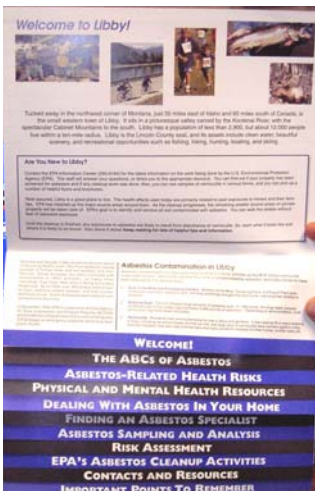
EPA developed a Libby-friendly, Superfund website that is one of a kind. It is very user-friendly and positive. The website is based on a brochure EPA developed as a community resource. The 12-page brochure covers a variety of topics related to asbestos and the cleanup in Libby. It presents risks in an objective manner. It shows that, while there is contamination in Libby, it is being addressed, and Libby is a great place to live. **Jim - Wendy says you should scrutinize this.**

Balanced Descriptions of Asbestos-Related Risk

EPA has consistently tried to be very balanced when dealing with asbestos risk. We are careful to explain the risks, without creating undue fear in the community and those interested in visiting.

EPA organized two conferences focused on asbestos risk issues:

- In September 2000, EPA sponsored a Conference on Asbestos and Public Health. This facilitated event drew more than 135 people. The conference was an opportunity to provide information and promote discussion on public health issues related to asbestos. The sessions were videotaped and are available at the EPA Information Center and the Libby Public Library.
- In 2001, EPA organized a conference in Libby to review the state of the science on asbestos health effects. It was co-sponsored by MSHA, NIOSH, ATSDR, and CalEPA and drew over 250 attendees, including other Federal agencies, states, public (Libby residents), and the private sector (W.R. Grace).





Helping to Erase the Stigma (cont.)

EPA's Local Information Center

EPA's local Information Center at 501 Mineral Avenue is a resource for locals and visitors who need information on EPA's work in Libby, either in general or as it relates to their property. Locals can read documents, pick up copies of brochures, check the clean-up schedule, and meet with EPA staff.

The Information Center has been complimented by local leaders for setting a great example of how downtown businesses should look - especially the sign.

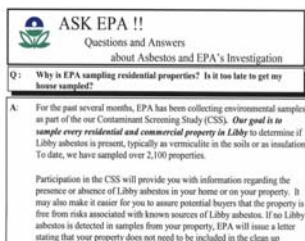


Community Education and Outreach

EPA puts significant effort into developing tools to help the public understand the asbestos-related risk and the Superfund activities in the Libby area. We look for ways to increase awareness, so that people understand the risks, but still know that Libby is a great place to live.

Examples of this educational outreach include:

- Support of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and Technical Assistance Group (TAG)
- Placement of Question and Answer (Q&A) format ads in the local papers and broadcast over local radio to address concerns and questions
- Preparation of numerous fact sheets on specific topics, mailed to the entire community
- Monthly "Superfund and You" columns in local papers to make people aware of timely process and technical issues
- Production of a cleanup video for people to watch that explains the process
- Preparation of customized information packets to explain cleanup and relocation process to residents
- Sponsorship of asbestos conferences, redevelopment workshops, targeted meetings with local groups to address issues specific to that group, and a special 2-day TAG education workshop in Denver
- Presentations at community health fairs



Helping to Erase the Stigma (cont.)

EPA is committed to making sure the people of Libby have access to the information they need about the site.

The Results

The results of this effort to educate and communicate are evidenced by:



- High satisfaction ratings in community surveys (78% of respondents to a recent survey said that EPA was doing a satisfactory or very good job).
- Positive press in local newspapers (plus fewer angry letters to the editor).
- A favorable view of fact sheets, direct mailings, and newspaper ads and stories as a method of obtaining information on the project. Most of the respondents of a recent community-wide survey indicated that these were the information transfer methods they preferred.
- EPA has been invited to several groups and community meeting to provide updates and answer questions.



Doing Business in Libby

The Need

The community was concerned that EPA was not spending enough of the money needed for the investigation and cleanup of the Libby Asbestos Site locally. The community wanted EPA to make an effort to spend money and hire locally, wherever possible.

EPA's Response – Maximize Dollars Locally

EPA has made a concerted effort to put money into the local economy, wherever possible within the constraints of the federal procurement regulations and the needs of the project.

Spending Locally

The Libby project contributes to the local economy in many of ways that are not always obvious. These include:

- salaries paid to local workers
- personal purchases (such as groceries, clothes, gas, rent, houses, etc.) by workers
- personal use of local services by the project team (doctors, dentists, veterinarians, taxidermists, etc.)
- project purchases (equipment and supplies)
- project rentals (buildings, furniture, equipment, etc)
- patronage of local services (restaurants, bars, hotels, movie theater, newspapers)
- property and income taxes
- rental of local vehicles for the field team
- much, much more

Wherever possible, EPA's contractors and subcontractors shop locally to support the Libby area economy. For example, *in one year alone*, project expenses in Libby for salaries, subcontractors, lodging, meals, office rental, and supplies were more than **\$1,100,000**. This does **not** include personal expenses incurred by the project team. Obviously, input to the local economy has been substantial.

Doing Business in Libby (cont.)

Hiring Locally, Whenever Possible

EPA has a choice, on Superfund sites, about hiring laborers and contractors. In Libby, EPA made the choice to hire locals, because it was financially beneficial to the community. EPA encourages our contractors to use local labor where possible, even though this is not a CERCLA mandate.

Picture of local workers

Much of the work that is done on the Libby project is specialized and technical. Federal contracting processes are very specific and require EPA to use contractors that have been through a rigorous selection process. Available jobs are listed through the Libby Job Corps. At present, the Libby team includes CDM has nine locals, with one additional due to be hired. This represents about one third of our staff.

Supporting the Port Authority

EPA prioritized cleanup of the Stimson Central Maintenance Building to support the redevelopment goals of the Port Authority. EPA's contractor, CDM, consolidated their operations by moving from several temporary structures into a single office space at the Stimson property. CDM's long-term lease of this property supports the redevelopment goals of the Port Authority. EPA also provided aerial photo information to Port Authority, to support their marketing efforts.

Picture of CDM's new office space or sign out front

The Results

The positive results of this effort to spend and hire locally are:

- Support of the local economy through influx of indirect and direct project money.
- Enhanced relationship between the project team and the citizens of Libby.
- Development of a local workforce that helps to support the local economy and control project costs.
- Promotion of the redevelopment of a valuable, but heretofore undesirable,



Jim Christiansen

ha, ha man, just kidding!



Addressing Concerns as They Arise

The Need

The Libby Asbestos Project is extremely dynamic. Given the complexity of the site issues and a community that is often divided in their thinking about those issues, it is impossible to predict all potential problems that may arise. EPA should be flexible and able to react to special concerns as they arise.

EPA's Response

In response to this need, EPA has demonstrated great flexibility in responding to concerns as they arise, in cooperation with local officials, the business community, and residents. The following are a few examples of that response, where we have set aside previously scheduled events in order to specially address an issue brought to our attention.

Contamination and development concerns addressed by EPA include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ Motocross track sampling | ■ <i>Cadillac</i> restoration of school tracks and ice rinks |
| ■ Johnson Acres support | ■ Decontamination facilities supplied to firefighters during the 2nd Hand Store fire |
| ■ Prioritized cleanup of J. Neils park | ■ Sampling of fire fighters to ensure they are not unknowingly transferring asbestos contamination |
| ■ Immediate response to address boat ramp issues | ■ Cleanup of schools on a priority basis |
| ■ HEPA vacuums provided to local schools | |
| ■ Respirators for local fire fighters | |

The Results

The positive result of this flexibility is that:

- The community feels that EPA is responsive to their needs.
- Xx
- (waiting on input)



We Are Part of the Community

The Need

There was a concern in the community that EPA's contractors were not part of the local community, did not interact with the community, and did not share their values or concerns.

EPA's Response

Most of our contractors live in Libby, either year-round or on an "as needed" basis. They attend local churches, shop at local stores, and recreate nearby. Their children attend local schools. Because this is their home, too, they are concerned about the community and often lend a helping hand to make Libby a better place. A list of contributions made by our contractors and subcontractors has been compiled, and EPA is providing it to the local media, along with any backup information necessary.

The following are just a few examples of that outreach to the community.



- Bowling Fundraiser for the CARD clinic/ E:ABC's documentary
- Troy Easter Egg Hunt
- Annual VFW Flag Program
- Canned food drive to benefit the Food Pantry
- Wings - Lincoln County cancer support fund
- Kootenai Pets for Life - raffle support
- St. Johns Lutheran Hospital Health Fair
- Sponsorship of "Libby Bucks" through the Chamber of Commerce
- Support for Breast Cancer awareness
- St. Johns Lutheran Hospital Run/Walk
- Libby aerial print and framing to Libby Asbestos Fair
- The Libby High School cell phone/ink cartridge fundraiser
- CPR class via Dave Thompson Search and Rescue to raise funds for them
- EPA vs. Girls Softball Team - helped generate money for team trip to the National Tournament in Wisconsin by playing a softball game against them; money for runs!
- "Close Up" raffle tickets to support LHS students' trip to Washington D.C.
- Libby Rotary Club - donations via silent auction items



The Results

The result of this connection to the community is that our contractors and subcontractors are more aware of the issues and concerns facing locals and are better able to respond to them. Also, the local community is better able to understand and trust the people working on this project.



A Safe and Thorough Cleanup

Despite technical, scientific, administrative and financial challenges, we are working to complete the cleanup in the shortest time possible. THAT is our #1 priority, and it is the best thing we can do for Libby – from either a health or an economic standpoint.

We are not an economic development agency, but we have worked extremely hard to limit the impacts of the investigation and cleanup in Libby, as well as try to provide some limited assistance. We will work to remove areas from the Superfund National Priority List (NPL) as quickly as possible, but this will take time. Rest assured, we are constantly improving and streamlining our cleanup process in an effort to bring the project to closure as quickly as possible.

National Recognition of Engineering Expertise

As a testament to the skill and innovation shown at Libby, the American Council of Civil Engineers (ACCE) recognized the Libby project (specifically EPA's contractor, CDM) with the Grand Award for 2004 for Engineering Excellence in the Environmental Category. CDM also received the 2005 Honor Award from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers (AEEE) in the operations and management category for its tailored asbestos emergency response program.

Community Approval of EPA's Work

In March 2005, postcard surveys were sent to all residents of Libby and Troy (4,300 addresses). 78% of those responding said they believe EPA is doing a very good or satisfactory job!

We also provide follow-up remediation surveys and comment cards to people whose property has been cleaned up by EPA. The responses we receive help us monitor how well we are doing, identify potential problem areas, and modify our work, where necessary. The responses are primarily positive and indicate that we are doing a good job and people are generally happy with the work being done.

Examples of responses we have received from residential cleanup cards are:

Jim, Wendy would rather not have these, since there were negative comments, too. Your decision.

- "You are doing great things for our community. We all thank you. Keep up the great work."
- "Our cleanup couldn't have been handled any better!!"
- "EPA did a good job.... No complaints. Thanks."
- "We were pleased on how soon the cleanup was done..."

A Safe and Thorough Cleanup (cont.)

- “I appreciate all the work that EPA did. They were all very nice to me and very considerate, also. I was treated with respect by all of the EPA workers. Thank you all very much.”

Should we have comments from other sources (survey, letters, comments from elected officials, etc here, too?)